Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Bill, 2005, based on the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance which examined the Bill, are under the government's consideration.

(b) The objective of pension reforms in India is to provide a well-regulated, modern, sustainable pension system, which offers portability, flexibility and choice to subscribers. The nature of the institutional architecture will depend on the PFRDA Bill, 2005.

(c) The pension reform process initiated in India is the outcome of the deliberations and recommendations of several expert committees and groups, including Project OASIS (Old Age Social and Income Security) of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, a Ministry of Finance Working Group and a high level expert group headed by Shri B. K. Bhattacharya, former Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka.

Insurance cover to Rural Areas

†2315. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that insurance companies of private sector are not paying any special attention towards rural areas though four to five years have passed since their business started;

(b) whether Government are considering to take any steps to provide insurance facilities to most of the population of rural areas; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) Insurance companies whether in public or private sector are required to comply with obligations towards the rural and social sectors laid down by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) (Obligation of the insurers towards the rural or social sectors) Regulations, 2002. The IRDA monitors the performance of the companies against the stipulated obligations under these Regulations. The IRDA has informed that all the insurers have complied with the requirements to provide cover for the rural population. The IRDA has also notified Regulations on micro insurance under which insurance companies can offer combinations of long term life products with short term non-life products to the weaker sections of the society in rural areas.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.